

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1, 2, and 4-9 were rejected. By entry of this amendment, claim 1 has been amended. Consequently, claims 1-2 and 4-9 are pending in this application. No new matter has been added.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 1,2, and 4-7 were rejected as being unpatentable over Gere et al. (US 5,590,617), in view of Caserta et al. (US 5,727,494).

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as amended, is patentable over the cited references, as features of the claim are not disclosed, taught, or suggested in the references. For example, claim 1 recites that the actuating rod, which is connected to the steerable part of the marine propulsion unit by the flexible coupling means, is mounted to a rack arm of the steering element's rack. Gere does not disclose, teach, or suggest this feature. In Gere, the marine steering cable 176 is mounted to the **housing** of the rack and pinion steering unit 152, not to the rack or rack arm. (US 5,590,617, column 12, lines 30-35 and Fig. 13).

Reliable and accurate vehicle steering is very important for safety. The present invention recited in claim 1 assures the operator of the vehicle of the availability of steering control at any time, whether the vehicle is on land, on water, or in transition between the two. In clear contrast, the Gere system depends on the correct and leak free operation of a pressurized air system. As such, the present invention is safer and intrinsically simpler than the Gere system. The Gere system is also bulky and heavy at a location at the front of the vehicle where the weight has to be carefully controlled in a planing amphibious vehicle.

Further, Caserta does not disclose, teach, or suggest that the actuating rod is mounted to a rack arm of the steering element's rack. In Caserta, the steering cable for the marine propulsion

unit is wound around the steering shaft 23, not an actuating rod mounted to a rack arm. (US 5,727,494, column 5, lines 5-10 and Fig. 9). This type of steering arrangement is unsuitable for high speed planing amphibious vehicles, where the force required to steer the marine propulsion unit is high. Further, there is high risk that the steering arrangement disclosed in Caserta would conflict with a mechanism designed to ensure crushability of the steering column in an accident and/or any telescopic adjustment mechanism of the steering column.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as amended, is patentable over the cited references, as features of the claim are not disclosed, taught, or suggested in the references. Claims 2 and 4-7 are patentable over the cited references at least based on direct or indirect dependence on claim 1 and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 8 was rejected as being unpatentable over Gere et al. (US 5,590,617), in view of Caserta et al. (US 5,727,494) with respect to claim 1, and further in view of Bufler Ernst (DE 3820967 A1).

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 8 is patentable over the cited references. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as amended, is patentable over the cited references, as features of the claim are not disclosed, taught, or suggested in the references. Therefore, claim 8 is patentable over the cited references at least based on direct dependence on claim 1 and is in condition for allowance.

Claim 9 was rejected as being unpatentable over Gere et al. (US 5,590,617), in view of Caserta et al. (US 5,727,494) with respect to claim 1.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 9 is patentable over the cited references. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as amended, is patentable over the cited references, as features of the claim are not disclosed, taught, or suggested in the references. Therefore, claim 9 is patentable over the cited references at least based on direct dependence on claim 1 and is in condition for allowance.

In summary, independent claim 1 is believed to be allowable. Further, the remaining pending dependent claims are allowable at least based on direct or indirect dependence from allowable independent claim 1.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims of this application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims of this application is respectfully solicited. Furthermore, if the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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